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SAM KIETH
INTERVIEW

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FEBRUARY 1992

WIZARD

No. 6

THE GUIDE TO COMICS

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WIZARD
VOLUME 1
NUMBER 6
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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Welcome to the World of Wizard #6

Computer problems, that's it, that's all, absolutely nothing I can do about it. If I tell you, the nightmares - this issue was almost late. It's about 2:45am Tuesday night, with only 48 hours to make up lots of lost time.

Enough of my complaining, all I need is a good clean shave, 6 hours of zzzz's, and another Todd McFarlane cover. Well, at least 2 out 3 wouldn't be bad, for now.

I recently went to the Mid-Ohio Con and got a chance to meet some familiar names. I'm sure you've all noticed, John Byrne and I seemed to have gotten along well. You know what that means (cough, cough, cover, cough, cough).

There was one thing plaguing me since Ohio, for some reason, Fried Mush, happens to be a delicacy. I just don't know why anyone would order that in a restaurant.

I wanted to let you know that I am incredibly impressed with all the Wizard covers we received. You're awesome. We literally have two piles as tall as me with all your entries. Because of all your dedication, we are dedicating issue #7 to all of you who sent in covers to us. We couldn't possibly do them all justice in one issue, so over the next few months we'll give you a chance to look at the best new talent.

I really had to twist Sam's arm to get this Hulk piece, I hope you enjoy it, I know it's one of the finest pieces I've seen.

The Big Cheese,

Gareb S. Shamus

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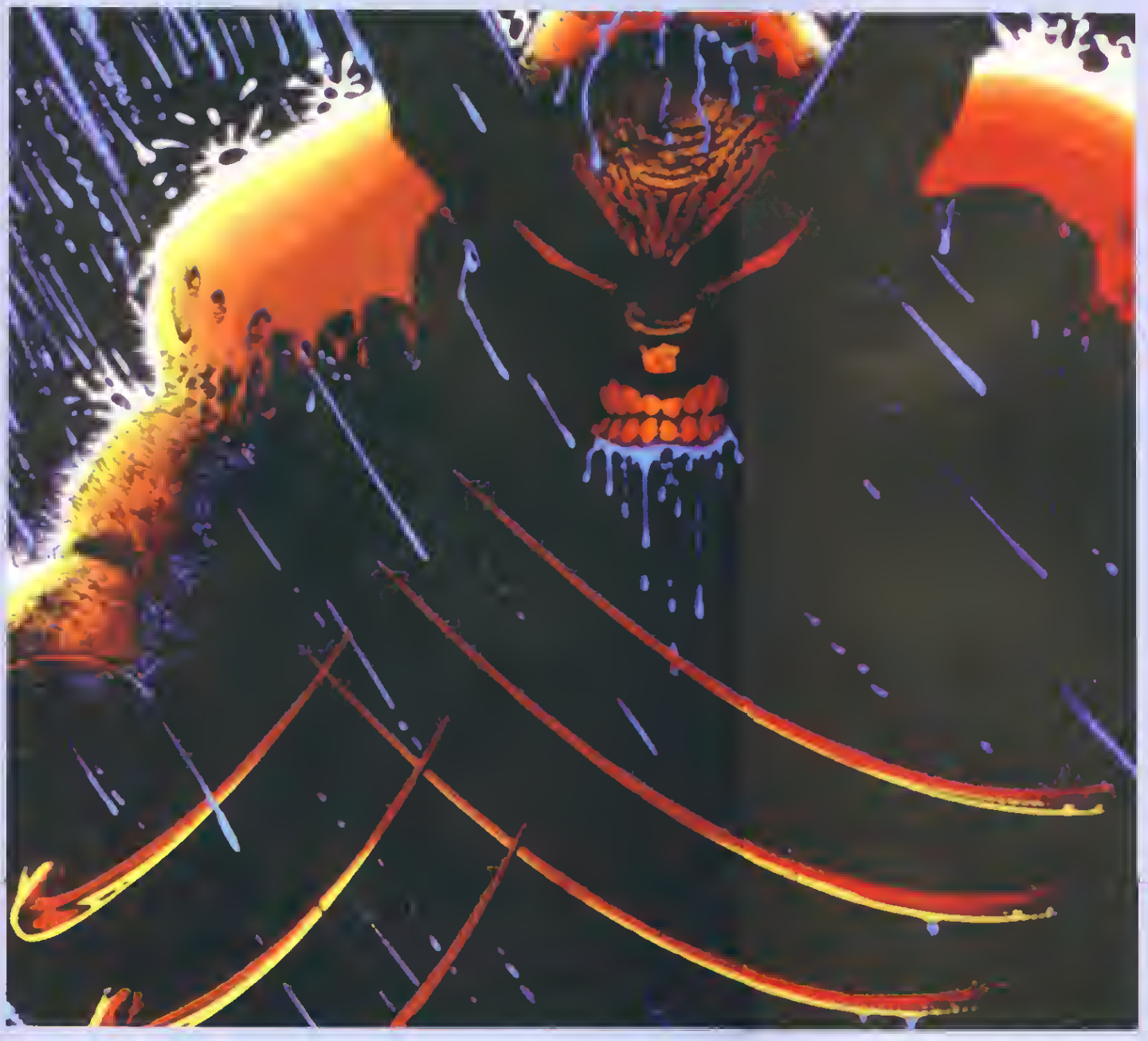

SANDY CLAWS

AN INTERVIEW WITH SAM KIETH

by Patrick Daniel O'Neill

He gets co-creator credit on Sandman, though he gives the credit himself to Neil Gaiman. He followed Barry Windsor-Smith on the Marvel Comics Presents Wolverine feature...and didn't look like a second-hand choice in the process. He's Sam Kieth (I before E, please), and he's a talent with a sense of humor—about himself and about the field he has chosen: comic books.

WIZARD: How did you break into the business?

SAM KIETH: I started working at smaller comic-book companies—all of which have gone out of business since—and worked my way up to the larger companies. Not that smaller companies are down on the list; you name the company, I've probably done at least a back-up story for them.

Boy, this is wandering. Can you make up a better answer? [laughter]

WIZARD: There are lots of places an artist can work—advertising, illustrate on—why comics? What is it about comics that said to you, "This is where I want to work"?

SAM KIETH: That's a great question.

Probably, for me, it was the easiest thing. Certainly, I've found it easier than the little advertising work I've done or doing art design for movies or any one of a number of other things. Relatively speaking, comic-book artists—and I would assume writers, you'd know better than me—have the

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maximum amount of freedom, wouldn't you think?

I mean, generally, there's nobody telling you to change something a million times, as I saw happen in advertising. If you are being asked to change things a lot in comics, you probably have the wrong editor. Most editors that are actually...well, mammals, and not serpent-like...won't cause you too much hardship.

That sounded really cynical, didn't it? [laughter]

Have you seen the Wolverine series I did in *Marvel Comics Presents* with Peter David?

WIZARD: Haven't finished it, yet—but I'm reading it.

SAM KIETH: There's some little stuff I tried to put in there, I don't know if people caught it or not.

In one of the stories, I put in the bulldog from *Rocketeer*—the one with a pipe. I'm a big fan of Dave Stevens, so I put the bulldog in the background of one of the dream sequences. Nobody caught it! I was sure Marvel would have taken it out! And later on, sure they would get wise, I changed it to a poodle—and they caught the poodle, but not the *Rocketeer* dog! "Why does this poodle have a pipe?" they asked. And I couldn't tell them—because they'd take the bulldog out, too.

WIZARD: When you're working on something like Wolverine, did Peter give you a fairly detailed plot?

SAM KIETH: That was odd. Even Peter would tell you that, in the beginning, it was pretty detailed and toward the middle, when he found out *I* was doing it, it got less so.

You see, when Peter wrote the first two chapters, he thought Todd McFarlane was going to draw it—and when Todd had to back out, I got it...and then Peter said, "If Sam's gonna do this, let's make it really weird." Then he started adding all this strange stuff—and like a fool I kept requesting all these odd things to appear in the story. So Peter had to figure out how to get them into Madripoor, that's where the dream scenario came from. That's the only logical reason for the hot dogs in the story.

Kids keep asking, "Was there a plan or method in doing this?" I'd like people to believe there was. Peter's a talented enough writer that, in the end, it kind of makes sense. I said to him, "You know, I really think this story reads like we knew exactly what we were doing from the beginning."

Did Peter tell you about the eyeball thing?

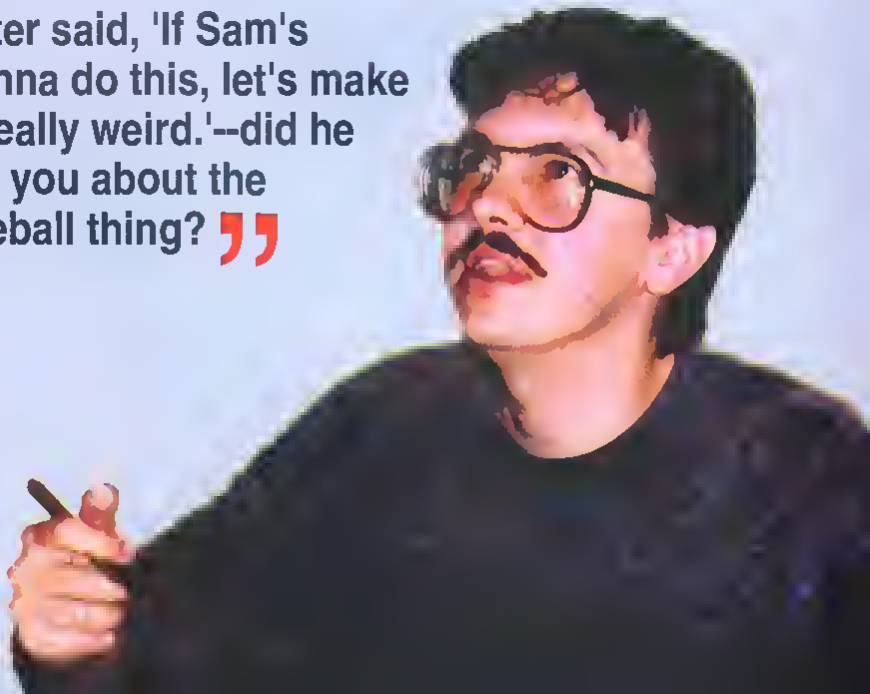
WIZARD: No.

SAM KIETH: There's a part where Wolverine rips the villain's eyeball out of the socket, puts it in his mouth and spits it out. When Peter told me this originally, he described it very vividly as a very violent scene. I thought he was asking for it to be very graphic.

I made it *way* too graphic—I forgot that kids are going to read this! Everybody said, "Are you nuts?" And I agreed...so I changed it.

WIZARD: One of those times when it's good to have an editor.

"Peter said, 'If Sam's gonna do this, let's make it really weird.'--did he tell you about the eyeball thing?"



SAM KIETH: Very much. I had gone into my cynical 24-year-old mode, but there's a lot of little bitty kids who read this.

WIZARD: As you know, there's been a lot of talk over the past few months about the concept of the writer-artist. .or artist-writer, whichever way you want to put it. Have you ever given any though to writing you own material?

SAM KIETH: There are a lot of facetious things I could say that would get me into trouble.

What would you think if I said, "Yeah, I really want to write!" Would you think, "Gee, this guy's getting too big for his britches." Or would you think, "Well, he's ambitious, but probably a little too ambitious for his own good," or "Go ahead, let him write. If he can, great. if he cant, he'll burn his own bridges."

WIZARD: My personal attitude is that if an artist has to show samples before he gets a job as an artist, the artist who wants to write has to do the same. You ought to have to prove your talent before you get handed plum assignments.

SAM KIETH: I'd agree with that. That makes perfect sense.

It would be a nightmare—although I know it won't happen to me—if somebody were so popular as an artist that they could say, "I want to write," and things would just form around them to make it happen.

I don't cast aspersions on anybody who's done that, though. I have ideas for stories, and I'm interested in co-plotting, but that's as far as I can go. For the actual words, I'd want to work with Bill Loebs or Neil Gaiman or Peter David, somebody who knew what they were doing. That was the good thing about working on *Sandman*. .Neil let me come up with parts of it. And Peter, too. He thought of the concept of Cyber and let me give it visuals.

That's the strength of an artist-and-writer collaboration. It seems there are certain pitfalls that the writer-artist tends to fall into.

DOC BRUCE BANNER, BELTED BY GAMMA RAYS

A look at the Incredible Hulk

by Patrick Daniel O'Neill

The giant green guy with a mad on, the Incredible Hulk, is perhaps—after Spider-Man—Marvel's most recognizable character. But most of the world probably has little idea how much the Hulk's background and abilities have changed in the nearly 30 years of his publishing history.

As originally designed, the Hulk was something of a combination of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the Frankenstein monster, and maybe even a bit of the vampire legend.

Today, he's a much more complex creation, with roots deep in modern psychological theory. For those who came

in late, the Hulk was created when Dr. Robert Bruce Banner was accidentally exposed to gamma radiation from a bomb of his own creation. In the early stages of his career, Banner would change into the gray-skinned behemoth dubbed the Hulk by the armed forces whenever night fell. Later (actually the second issue of his original title) his skin color shifted to green and the transformation became somewhat erratic.

Eventually, Banner and his comrade—teenager Rick Jones—could control the change through a measured dose of gamma radiation. During some of this period, the Hulk was completely under the command of Jones. Later, Banner discovered that raised epinephrine levels in his system (triggered by the "fear or flight" syndrome common to all mammals) caused the amazing change to the Hulk. It was this version of the Hulk that prevailed for many years. Often Banner would remain as the green monster for months at a time.

Strange shifts would occur in the Banner/Hulk shared experience over time. Sometimes, the Hulk would seem to be a perfectly rational, though somewhat more brutal version of Banner himself. Other times, the monster would seem to be a complete child, with little real understanding of his surroundings. Occasionally over the years, Banner's normal personality would seem to be in complete control of the Hulk persona.

For one period, Banner's personality became completely submerged, and the Hulk became an unthinking, unspeaking beast. For his protection (and the world's), the magician Dr. Strange isolated the Hulk at a mystic crossroads between dimensions. During this time, it was revealed that Bruce Banner had been an abused child.

Eventually, the Hulk was released from his mystic exile and Banner's mind returned. But the psychiatrist and part-time adventurer Dr. Leonard Samson discovered a method to separate not only the persona but the physical bodies of Banner and the Hulk. This new Hulk was even more bestial than ever before, while Banner was at last able to live his life without the shadow of his monstrous alter ego.

This new Hulk was even more bestial than ever before

His happiness was short-lived, however, as it became obvious that Banner could not survive without the added vitality the Hulk gave to his frail physique. Samson was forced to reintegrate the two, and the Hulk now reverted to his original form: gray, brutal but intelligent, and appearing only at night. It was theorized during this time that the Hulk transformation was a form of mutated cancer, creating new body cells within Banner's body at an astonishing rate and thus healing any wound or internal damage almost instantaneously.

Eventually, as Samson's investigations continued, he came to the conclusion that Banner's experiences as an abused child had caused a multiple personality disorder, resulting in three distinct persons—the

meek, mild, highly intellectual human Banner; the green Hulk, filled with child-like rage and child-like longing for affection; and the gray Hulk, a brutal being ruled by his own desires and emotions.

Samson, through hypnosis, reintegrated the three into a single being: the new Hulk, still

enormous in size but now more human in appearance, with Banner's intellect, though colored by the more emotional nature of both previous versions of the Hulk. But how did each of these changes come about? Basically, as the creative teams shifted on the character, each one had a new "take" on the Hulk. In fact, co-creator (with Jack Kirby) Stan Lee probably had three or four variations on the Hulk in the four or five years in which he was the principle writer for the character. Why? Well, brilliant as the original conception of the Hulk was, Lee probably never thought it would last 30 years. It was simply a combination of Marvel's long-standing monster comics of the 1950s and '60s and the newly successful superhero comics. It's pretty tough to make a split personality in which one half has a child's mind and beast's rage—and in which "that" personality is the more interesting—an on-going character. How often can a writer put "Hulk smash!" on the page and feel he's creating anything worthwhile?

So, over time, first Lee, and then writers like Roy Thomas, Gary Friedrich, Bill Mantlo, John Byrne, and Al Milgrom worked up variations on the theme. Eventually, the most recent writer, Peter David, synthesized all those ideas into a (somewhat) cohesive whole.

How long will *this* version last? A lot depends on how long David decides to stay with the book, on how sales hold up (currently they are excellent), and how the public at large takes to the idea. After all, most of the American audience knows the television version of the Hulk far better than it knows any of the myriad comic-book variations. The TV Hulk was one of the better-done Marvel screen adaptations, but it's a far cry from David's well thought-out "take" on the jade giant.

In the meantime, the Hulk is riding higher than he has since the days of his TV fame. But still, don't make him angry.

You wouldn't like him when he's angry.

Beyond the Hulk's Frontiers with Peter David

by Patrick Daniel O'Neill

"Child abuse is one of the most common Root causes For multiple personality--and what is the Hulk if not a multiple personality?

It's all there!" Peter David exclaims, explaining his reasons for the numerous changes he has made in the character of Marvel's heroic green monster over the last five years.

"Most of the changes rung in on the Hulk have been from external forces. 'He's got a bullet in his head.' 'The Leader's subjected him to radiation and he can't change.' And now he's this, now he's that, now he's some other thing," David notes. "It was always an outside force acting on the Hulk. It made him the ping-pong ball of the Marvel Universe'—What shall we do to the Hulk *this* month?' What new thing can we inflict on this character and screw around with the basics of the concept?

"I basically work from the other direction, inside-out. Doesn't necessarily make me any better, just different."

But David is quick to admit that he was not the first writer to suggest this background for Robert Bruce Banner and his jade alter ego. The inspiration for David's run on the character came, he notes, from a story published nearly 15 years ago.

"Bill Mantlo did this wonderful story that set up Bruce as an abused child and implied that the potential for the Hulk was there all along and the gamma bomb just released it," he recalls. "I thought this was incredible fodder for a series of stories—and then Bill never did anything with it! I couldn't understand it—he went off in another direction. 'No, no, wait—what about this story over here?' Bill seemed to regard that story as the climax and answer to the storyline he was doing about the three little 'thingamabobbles' that were following the Hulk around and being his personal Greek Chorus. My feeling was, 'Yes, but those three little guys weren't *interesting*.' This is not the time to close off the story, this is the springboard for the story."

"Bill Mantlo spelled it all out and then went off in another direction," David continues. "And I said, 'No, no, I want to go back in *this* direction!' Once I took over the book, that story was very much a guiding force for me in terms of the direction I went. It was always present in the writing, even when it wasn't a major plot element. It was a plot element finally around #376-377, that's when it really came to the fore—but it was always part of the Hulk's persona, once I started the book. If you go back and re-read the stuff, you will find that there are always little allusions and references to what happened to Bruce Banner as a child, references made both by Bruce and by the Hulk.

"Since I started on the book, this is what I have been building toward—but I had to work a long time at it," David explains. "I wanted to make the grey Hulk as much of an individual personality as I could, so the reader could feel something for him. I knew once I got to the point where I reintegrated the personalities, it would have to be a one-issue story—or else it would lose the dramatic impact. As it is, some people say it went too fast."

Comics fans are notorious for complaining that major characters never change—and equally notorious for complaining loudly when a writer or artist makes big changes in a major character. David says his alterations to the Hulk were no exception. "Have

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the long-time Hulk fans objected to what I'm doing? Of course—we've been getting letters like that since I started on the book. There's always going to be someone who says I'm ruining the Hulk," he points out. "When I first came on the book and it became clear that I was *not* bringing back the dumb green Hulk, that I was sticking with the more intelligent, savvy grey Hulk—that garnered tons of mail that said I was screwing it up. Then, as time went by, and the grey Hulk settled in and I and the readers got more of a feel for the character, people started saying, 'Hey, I *like* the grey Hulk', some of that, of course, was because the hard-core green Hulk fans left.

"And, once everyone was happy with the grey Hulk, I brought back the green one," he goes on. "Now came the deluge of letters that said, 'You're screwing it up! How dare you bring back the dumb green Hulk!' Then I had *both* of them running around... and now I had letters arguing for or against both of them. When I integrated them with Bruce, I got letters arguing for the return of one or the other version of the Hulk and a handful of letters that said, 'Gee, I like what you're doing.'

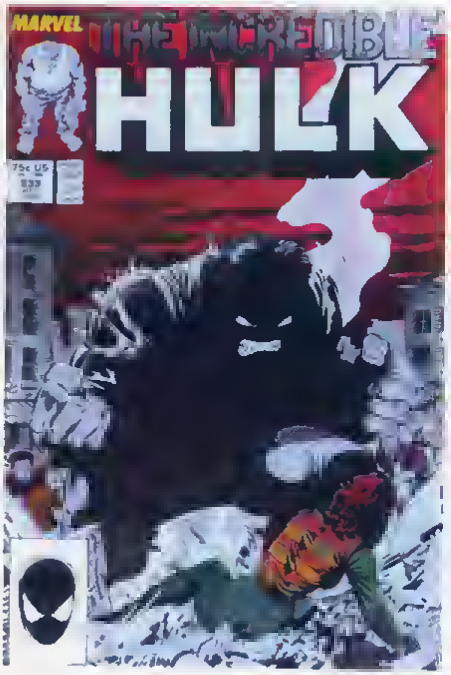
"Controversy is no stranger."

Sales on *The Incredible Hulk* have climbed steadily since David began his writing tenure, not even seeing a downturn when fan-fave artist Todd McFarlane left for more web-strewn quarters. How does David account for this? "The people who like the book read it and recommend it to their friends. The people who are outraged by what I've done, pick it up each month to see how much more outraged they can get. It's easy to find comics that bore you or don't surprise you, but to find comics that royally piss you off is really difficult," he laughs. "Considering how many people complained about Claremont's version of *X-Men*, I figured Chris's secret was pissing people off."

Does David see himself writing *Hulk* forever? "If I ever reach the point where I think I have nothing to say, I'll move on," he says.

One title from which Peter David *has* moved on is DC's *Star Trek* series, based on the original TV series and subsequent movies. In this case, however, it wasn't entirely his choice.

"Over a year ago, a representative of Gene Roddenberry's office stated to me that he felt the tone they were looking for on the *Star Trek* comic was something on a par with what Gold Key had published 20 years ago," he recalls. "When I basically laughed in his face, he spent the subsequent months doing everything possible to water down story after story after story. It reached the point where simply having my name on the story was enough for them to reject it."



"There's always going to be someone who says I'm ruining the Hulk--You're screwing it up! How dare you bring back the dumb green Hulk!"

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FORCE!

"It was painfully clear--they just didn't want *me* on the book. It was sort of 'Here's a story by Peter David, let's reject it; now let's find a reason."

David says that, soon after, plotlines that previously would have been okayed with little or no comment were being rejected out of hand—and often for what seemed like spurious reasons. "We had storylines rejected, ostensibly, because 'Captain Kirk is no longer interested in women', or 'Chekov is no longer interested in command.' We were told we could do nothing about Uhura's family."

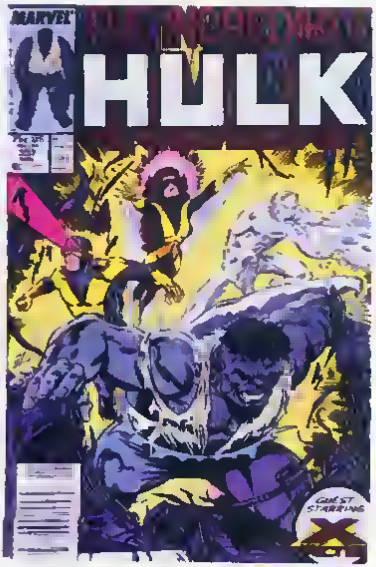
It boiled down, says David, to "you can't do that because we haven't established it" and "you can't do that because it isn't original. If you suggested something that hadn't been done, it was rejected because it hadn't been done; if you suggested something that had been done, it was rejected because it was a rehash. That happened frequently with alien races—'You can't use this alien race, it isn't established.' Or the converse, 'You can't use this alien race that we've established, why don't you invent your own?'"

Finally, a story proposal was rejected for a reason that neither David nor his editor, Bob Greenberger, could live with. "The event that made it clear to me was the rejection of a six-part time-travel storyline—a plot I had constructed very carefully to give them nothing on which to hang a rejection—with the contention that it was 'too complex for *Star Trek* fans to understand.' It was not simplistic enough for *Trek* fans to deal with, because they are—we were told—used to more simplistic time-travel stories. When I complained directly to a Paramount representative that this was a good story, I was told, 'Well, you're right, it is, you're just going to have to make it less good.'"

"It was painfully clear at that point that either they wanted an utterly simplistic comic book—or else they just didn't want *me* on the book. It was sort of 'Here's a story by Peter David, let's reject it, now let's find a reason.'"

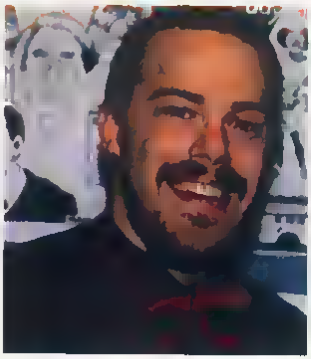
David devised a test to check on that last possibility. "I turned in a proposal for a plotline and then a full script, without my name on it. I had submitted it under the name 'Robert Bruce Banner.' That story was approved whole-heartedly, without a single change—the first *Star Trek* comic I had written in DC's second run that went through with no changes requested. That kind of clinched it."

At that point, David decided the decision to continue writing the comic-book version of *Star Trek* had, essentially, been taken out of his hands. "There was no way Bob Greenberger was going to fire me from the book, but I decided that if I continued on it, it would be more and more impossible for Bob to get it out on time," he remembers. "I was also concerned that if I had to keep 'dummying' it down, it would hurt my reputation. The credits on the book never say 'Written by Peter David with much interference from Paramount representatives.'



"I didn't quit the book lightly. For one thing, the *Star Trek* assignment was paying my medical benefits, walking away from medical benefits when my wife was pregnant was not something I did without a lot of thought. I find it ironic that the time-travel story was rejected for essentially the same reasons Gene Roddenberry's original pilot, 'The Cage,' was rejected—it was too complex, too difficult for the audience to understand.

ANDY MANGELS HOLLYWOOD HEROES



It's 16 days before Christmas in Gotham, and the most popular gift items are Batman merchandise. A red-beret-wearing troop of teens (led by Mike Sekowsky) calling itself the "Order of the Bat" patrols the streets. Batman is working more closely with the police, as evidenced in an exciting (if implausible) opening chase scene against five snowmobile-riding jewelry thieves. Pulling every trick possible out of the Batmobile (flame-throwers, heat-seeking missiles, grappling hooks, winches, fragmentation grenades, nets), Batman captures the crooks and delivers them, gift-wrapped, to the police.

That's the opening to the script for Batman II by Sam Hamm. Note that this is not the script for Batman Returns, currently being filmed by Tim Burton; rather, that film is based on later versions of a similar-but-different story by Den Waters and Wesley Strick. Hamm never went to a second draft of the script, as Tim Burton didn't like his handling of the characters this time around. This may strike you as odd, given the concessions Hamm makes in the story to the Burton/Keaton Batman mythas.

Back to the story. While Bruce Wayne resumes his relationship with Vicki Vale, Mr. Boniface [what happened to Oswald Cobblepot?], a fastidiously fussy bird trainer is released after 13 years in prison. He's rich, even after returning the $42 million he stole 13 years ago (the money wasn't buried, it was in banks, accruing interest). That night, out on the town, Bruce and Vicki hear about a mysterious street-kid who helped save a woman from muggers, when the Order of the Bat protectors ran away. Who is the mysterious youth?

A third character is introduced into the mix when the exotic-but-deadly Selina Kyle visits a wharf, and robs a drug-and-art smuggling operation as the Catwoman, killing dozens of men with her whip and razor-sharp talons. She steals an art piece for the Penguin; a stone raven. What's worse, she's framed Batman for the murderous carnage she left behind!

Batman suddenly finds himself at odds with the police in a city which, days before, idolized him. He brushes up with Catwoman after she's killed a prominent businessman (another of Gotham's "Five Family" men, of which Wayne is a part) and stolen a second stone raven, again implicating the Dark Knight. Meanwhile, Vicki is saved by the strange acrobatic street-kid, who identifies himself as Dick before bounding off to a hideout.

Bruce finds himself increasingly intrigued by Catwoman, and by Selina Kyle, a new curator at the

Flugelheim Museum. Still, he's worried that the other two surviving "Five Family" members have been threatened by "Batman." Several nights later, Catwoman lures Batman to the scene of a third murder, defeats him, and toys with him before dropping him twelve stories to the street and the waiting police. Only quick thinking and several bat-gimmicks save his live. He escapes with the help of the mysterious street-youth, who discovers his identity even as Bruce finds an odd red-and-green costume among the kid's belongings.

Confronting the only other survivor, Triptree, Bruce finds out that the "Five Families" each had a stone raven, which, when put together led to a huge treasure stolen by their ancestors. Because Bruce's father wouldn't go along with hiding this wrong-doing, the others had him killed! Now it's become personal.

When Triptree meets with the Penguin and Catwoman in the subway tunnels to give them the final two birds, he's killed. But the pair are thwarted when Dick steals the birds and Batman arrives and battles Catwoman. Our heroes are defeated, and Bruce takes Dick back to Wayne Manor to nurse his wounds, not knowing that Catwoman and Penguin have discovered that the Gotham treasure is in a cave below that very Manor!

The script climaxes in a dizzying fight-to-the-finish in Wayne Manor and the Batcave, during which the Catwoman is crippled, Alfred is shot, Batman and Vicki hang once again off a precipice, and the Penguin discovers Batman's identity before falling to his death, engulfed in a cloud of bats. In the aftermath, on Christmas Eve, Bruce's present to Vicki is a diamond engagement ring, as Dick looks on warily and Alfred

Batman II reads more like a comic book

tosses broken furniture into the roaring fire by a shattered Christmas tree. What a family portrait.

What's perhaps the most interesting about *Batman II* are the elements that were originally in the first film, written out and changed by screen-time. There is a scene of Batman charging on horseback (a la *Dark Knight*), similar scenes with Dick, and an ending in which the villain is attacked by bats before his death. There are several scenes as well in major landmarks we saw in the first film: the Flugelheim, Wayne's hall of armor, etc. On the former, it's probably Hamm's like for the scenes, which, when cut from the first film, became part of the second. On the latter, it's probable Hamm was told to utilize already-built sets.

Batman II reads more like a comic book than the original design for the first film did; Batman has enough batgadgets that he seems to have conspired with his '60s counterpart. The Penguin is very underutilized, making it clear that the Catwoman is the real focus villain of the script. Much of her dialogue has sexual overtones, though her flippant remarks when slashing people seem too inspired by Freddy Krueger.

None of the characters in the film are heavily developed, though Catwoman comes out the best. Bruce's dialogue portrays more of the Keaton distractedness than we saw in the original film, a plus in my book. It's interesting that Hamm felt he had to tie in the Waynes' murder to this film as well, though it seemed rather contrived. Also interesting is the "Order of the Bat," predating the *Legends of the Dark Knight* story DC just did by quite a while. I did wonder what the "Order" meant to the script, as they're also very under-utilized; they disappear as conveniently as the Batmobile. When Batman is decoying the police, he tells the auto-driven car to go on "Evasive." As it's never seen again or mentioned in the script, perhaps it's still evading the police nine days later!

The script sets up more interest for Robin in the projected next film; since he never appears in costume and, indeed, is never given a last name, Dick's character can be explored further. One interesting moment in the script did come when Vicki looked at the costume on a hanger and realized that the "R" on the chest meant "Richard."

Since *Batman II* is probably Sam Hamm's last work on Batman in the film world, it exists as an interesting study in conflicts.

Hamm's ideas and adherence to the Batman mythos, contrasted with the differing mythos of the film. Whether or not the Waters-Strick *Batman Returns* will be as interesting a movie is up to the future to tell.

We'll see you next month as we take a look at the *X-Men* movie script and other *Hollywood Heroes*!

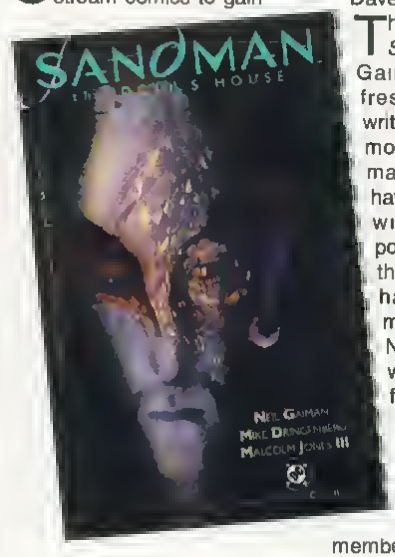
Who's Who in *Batman Returns*

Tim Burtan: currently directing the film in Los Angeles.
Wesley Strick: revising the script from Dan Waters' draft.
Michael Keaton: returns to the title role, with a slightly altered costume.
Danny DeVito: plays the Penguin, who's running for Mayor of Gotham City. His costume is very similar to the comic one, though darker and more "Burton-esque."
Michelle Pfeiffer: plays the Catwoman. The role was originally cast for Annette Benning, who dropped out due to pregnancy. Catwoman's costume is almost directly the grey body-suit she currently wears, though it's ripped and torn more
Paul Reubens: Pee-Wee Herman plays Oswald (Penguin) Cobblepot's father in a small cameo role
Marian Wayans: no longer in the film. Had a small unnamed role as "the kid," and was rumored to be a black Robin. There is no Robin or Robin-to-be in Batman Returns
Christopher Walken: plays Max Schreck, a millionare associate of the Penguin who helps him in his campaign.
Jan Haaks: the Saturday Night Live/Designing Women veteral plays a Penguin helper.
Michael Murphy: plays the current Mayor of Gotham City.
Pat Hingle: returns as Comissioner Gordon.
Michael Gaugh: returns as Alfred.
Kim Bassinger: does not return as Vicki Vale.
Billy Dee Williams: does not return as Harvey Dent

By TOM PALMER

Most comic fans today buy whatever comic features their favorite artist or charecter without bothering to see what kind of story the comic contains. For this reason, some comic writers are peid little attention, giving them no incentive to create innovative stories. In this column, I hope to point out some of the comics and get you, the reader, to give them a try

One of the major mainstream comics to gain attention for the quelity of its stories is *Sandman*, published monthly by DC. It's written (as many of you probably already know) by Neil Gaiman, but has no regular artist. A different artist is chosen to draw eech extended storyline, or just to illustrate e self-contained story. Among the artists featured at one time or another are Sam Kieth, Kelley Jones, Charles Vess, Matt Wagner and cover artist Dave McKean.



The concept behind *Sandman* hes allowed Gaiman to keep the book fresh and exciting. Most writers, if they had to write a monthly comic about the master of dreams, would have each issue take place within the dreams of a popular super-hero so that there would be reason to have e guest-star every month to boost sales. Needless to say, this would get boring very fast.

Instead, Neil Gaiman has created one of the most diverse comics out today. The character of the Sandman is e member of a family called the Endless. They have existed since the beginning of time and will be here until the end. This allows Gaiman e broad spectrum to base his stories on. The stories in *Sandman* have ranged from e unique take on the typical "quest" edventure, to short stories revolving around various historical personalities such as William Shakespeare and the Roman emperor Augustus. In these historical stories, the Sendman takes on a different eppeerence to reflect the styles end costumes of the period he's in.

While each storyline hes its own identity, the book retains a high artistic standard that has been mainteined from the start. In most ceses, Gaiman has written stories that suit each artist's style and specielities. For example, Kelley Jones, e cat owner, drew issue #18's "A Dream of a Thousend Cets," while Charles Vess, known for his fentesy artwork, was asked to draw the following issue's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," with its cast of faenes and fantastic creatures.

Usually, some comic book writers feel obligated to fill e page of a book with numerous

PALMER'S PICKS

word balloons. This is not the case with Neil Gaiman. He knows when the art can be used to tell the story without an abundance of words. There is a balance between both art and writing in each issue; there are never too many words floating around, nor are there too few.

Although the stories I have mentioned so far sound like they have nothing in common with each other, Gaiman says that he plans to end the series around the fiftieth issue, with all of the loose ends tied together. Even though the story is not over yet, its already evident that each "novel" ties into each other. Aside from the Sandman and his brothers and sisters, there are other characters that have appeared throughout the series. Unity Kincaid, a minor character from the first issue, provided the basis of "The Doll's House," the second major storyline. The dreams of Barbie were barely mentioned in "The Doll's House," but they are the foundation for the current novel, "A Game of You." Part of the fun of reading Sandman is finding the numerous other plot threads carried through each story.

One of the other things that can be followed is the development of Neil Gaiman's writing style and the evolution of the concept behind the comic. What seemed to be a typical horror comic at the beginning has changed slowly into a darker-edged fantasy comic. Gaiman says that the first novel "was a definite effort to explore the genres available." Each story was an examination of different types of horror stories, from "classical English horror," to experimentation with "some of the conventions of the old DC and EC horror comics." But, by the 8th issue, Gaiman acknowledges that,

I was beginning to find my own voice." From that issue on, the stories became more diverse and original, sometimes evoking the themes of fairy tales and myths, or having the depth of characterization and complexity usually found in novels.

Sandman is a complex comic book. It's difficult to describe every aspect of it briefly without having to go in depth about one particularly interesting detail. If you seem interested in any one of the things I have touched on, I urge you to give *Sandman* a try. You may find something you like.

Neil Gaiman knows when the art can be used to tell the story without an abundance of words.

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DRAWING THE SWORD

Alan Davis proves pen and pencil are at least as mighty as the sword as he takes on writing and drawing duties on Marvel's *Excalibur.*

by Greg McElhatton

One of Marvel's biggest run-away hits has been *The Uncanny X-Men,* a book which has resulted in many titles forming in its wake, popular books like *X-Factor, New Mutants, Wolverine, X-Force,* and the brand-new *X-Men.* But the one book that has always stood apart from the others has been *Excalibur,* a superhero team stationed in the United Kingdom.

Originally with the creative team of Chris Claremont writing and Alan Davis penciling, this was one of the hottest books on the market. With the departure of the entire team and fill-in stories one after another, popularity was at a decline. But now, fan-favorite Davis has returned to both pencil

and write *Excalibur*, in an attempt to bring the book back to the heights it once enjoyed

Davis says that although he had left the book after only penciling 16 issues, it was not because he didn't like the comic anymore "Basically when I left *Excalibur* it was because the time I had between receiving the script and the deadline for the art made it impossible to guarantee the quality of art that I wanted to give it. Around the end, I was doing rushed issues, and had to have guest artists come in to help out," Davis revealed "When I was offered the opportunity to write and draw *Excalibur* I would have all that extra time to work on the art that was absent before "

However, when Davis was first announced to be returning to *Excalibur*, his first issue was to be released in January 1991—and with inking partner Paul Neary also co-plotting However, outside events would cause both Neary to drop out of the project and Davis' first issue to be delayed eight months, debuting in August

"What happened was that the dollar to pound rate dropped dramatically—and for Paul to also work on it wouldn't have been worth it," Davis explained "We were originally going to start with #35, which was then pushed back to #37 When Paul dropped out, I told Terry [Kavanagh] that I would need until #42 to be sure that I would have enough time "

The result would be Scott Lobdell stepping in to write the seven issue gap between Claremont's final issue and Davis' first one However, the events in Lobdell's run were to some degree ones that Davis had originally planned

"There was a lot of excess baggage that was being carried around," Davis says, "and it really needed to be done away with For instance, explaining every issue why Kurt couldn't teleport, or why Kitty's power was working in reverse was a bit much New readers couldn't understand it, and writers found it hard to work with

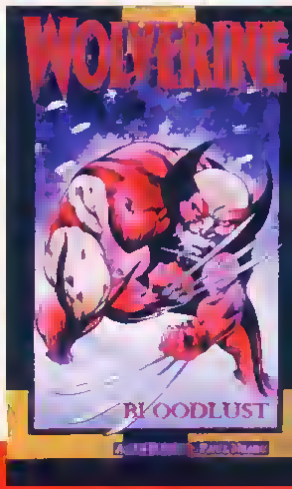
"When I pushed back my first issue to #42, that meant that I would have less time to get more things done The result was that Scott wrote the stories in which Nightcrawler's and Shadowcat's powers have both been restored to normal "

However, Davis has said that not quite all of the dangling plot threads left behind by Claremont will be dealt with in the near future "The one that I'm not allowed to touch is concerning Jamie Braddock, Vixen, Sat-Yr-Nin, Courtney Ross, and all of them Claremont will apparently be coming back and writing a graphic novel that will tie up all those loose threads Besides those," Davis assures, "anything that's left over will be brought to a close by issue #50.

"After issue #50 I don't plan on having stories of such great length," he continues, "The only reason the first story takes more or less nine issues is because of the magnitude of the things that need to be done. Having it bi-weekly will make it seem a bit shorter, however "

Davis has also promised that one thing he will not be doing is shaking up the team in any major way, a process that has become almost second nature when a new writer comes aboard a book. However, while most characters will remain the same, there is one that Davis could not let himself keep as is

"The only character that's going to be really changed is Widget. Besides him, the rest of



them are going to be nothing more than logically following their growth as characters," he insists.

Davis has also promised that while he won't be removing any major characters, that won't keep him from bringing new ones in.

"I'm going to be bringing in four totally new members, and one that's appeared in the book before," he says. "One of them is from Ireland, but basically, after issue #50, we'll be seeing a lot more of Europe. The situation over here is that Europe is becoming more of a whole, and Excalibur will reflect that. The team will also be splitting up in #43, and re-grouping with #47. During that time, while some of them will be in different parts of Europe, it will mostly be in Wilderness, with an emphasis on relationships, not where they are. After #50, we'll see a lot more of Europe."

Being in Europe, however, means that the group will be far away from New York City, the center of the Marvel Universe. One of the results of that is that they're quite a distance away from their sister group, the X-Men.

"There won't be any Excalibur/X-Men team-ups in the near future, no," Davis points out. "We're the junior book to *X-Men*, and before they team up with the X-Men, I want all of Excalibur to be able to stand up to the X-Men. I wouldn't want the X-Men to appear and make Excalibur look stupid next to them. I saw Bob [Harras] recently over here, and we did talk a bit about sometime down the line having the X-Men show up again.

"As for being a bit removed from the rest of the comics, well, I'm a bit new to writing in the Marvel Universe. However, they will play a bit more of a roll in it after issue #50. Once again, I want the team to be able to stand up on its own as characters before I throw them in, however."

Another side-effect is that, now, in addition to the team being entirely in Europe, so are both Davis and inker Mark Farmer. When asked if this could create any problems in sending in completed issues back to the USA, Davis didn't seem very worried.

"It's just as easy to send stuff from California to New York City as it is from England," Davis confesses. "The phone system works easily enough that I can get in touch with the home office when I need to. The only thing I really worry about is the cultural difference. What may seem normal to me may be very peculiar to an American reader, since I'm inside it and can't see

what it looks like to someone else. While I've had a bit of experience with American culture with all the TV imported, it still makes me worry a bit."

One oft-asked question is if there will be any more Claremont/Davis collaborations in the future, for both *Excalibur* and any other projects, including an announced *Excalibur* hard-cover graphic novel, being the biography of Kurt Wagner (Nightcrawler).

"Yes, I'd like to work with Chris again," says Davis, "but it really depends on our schedules. In addition, this is the first that I've ever heard about this Nightcrawler graphic novel, so I can't see it coming out in the near future."

Just working on *Excalibur* is enough for Davis right now. But while he's most famous for his *Excalibur* work, he has also penciled Batman, *Miracleman*, and a *Wolverine* special, projects which have all been very different from one another, Davis says.

"It really depends on who you're working with and the format. When I worked on *Miracleman* with Alan Moore and on *Captain Britain*, they were only a maximum of eight-page installments. One of the big differences with working on American comics is having at least 22 pages per issue. *Wolverine: Bloodlust* was 48 pages, and *Batman: Full Circle* was 64 pages, which means that you're devoting quite a bit of time to it.

"As for working on other projects, not in the near future—I'm really committed to *Excalibur* for the time being," Davis adds. "Down the line, I might do a special here and there, but nothing for now."

Although Davis has written a few issues of *Captain Britain* in the past, there are also many artists now being given high-profile writing assignments with no track record behind them. However, this doesn't seem to bother Davis in slightest.

"Just because they don't have any track record doesn't mean that they won't be very good," says Davis defensively. "I myself don't think my track record is very impressive. However, the fact that I'm writing and penciling made it a bit more ideal for me to do it. If I went to Marvel and asked to just write a series, I don't think that I'd get one on my virtues as a writer just yet."

While Davis may not think of himself highly as a writer, the overall response to Davis' new run has

COLLECTING COMICS IN THE 90s

By Pat McCallum

"What's the difference between a comic book with a U.P.C. symbol and one without"? This is a question that has haunted store owners for years and driven comic fans crazy. "What does the symbol mean? Why do some comics have drawings in them and others have bars? Which is worth more"?

Let's see if we can't clear this up a little bit. The reason comics have a Universal Product Code (UPC) is for quick processing of comics on the newsstand. This code is scanned into computers by all newsstand distributors, which makes the job of tracking all the comics much easier.

When returns are made to these distributors, they can process the returns accurately and efficiently. Comics that are shipped to hobby or specialty stores are called direct market comics, and have no use for the bar code since comic book stores don't return any comics. They purchase what they order. Instead, the companies can do different things with the box. they either use a standard "stamp" (i.e. Spider-Man's face, the Bat symbol, etc.), use it to promote the storyline ("Jimmy Olsen Kicked Into The Gutter"), or the cover artists use it as a doodle space or sometimes camouflage it into the cover (see J.L.A. #28 for a great example). As for price difference between newsstand and direct sales, it's rare that one would be more collectible than the other. Occasionally, a book like the second printing Spider-Man #1 comes along and suddenly the U.P.C. version is super-hot, but, in general that's uncommon. Some collectors prefer the non-U.P.C. books because of the artwork found in the box, but that's a personal preference, and has nothing to do with values.

Well, that's all I can say about U.P.C. symbols without getting to boring, so let me wish you a Happy New Year, and I'll see you next month!

Science Fiction

HEROES

PART II

FORMULAS AND GIMMICKS

BY LAWRENCE WATT-EVANS

Last time we gave a brief survey of DC's basic continuing science-fiction heroes, the men with quick wits, rayguns, and spaceships: Tommy Tomorrow, Kris KL-99, Captain Comet, and Space Ranger. They made up one category in the DC SF comics of the 1950s and 1960s. A second category, the largest, was one-shot stories. Stories where the hero, problem, and solution would all be presented in eight pages or so, never to be seen again. Those two categories dominated DC's SF throughout the 1950s.

But a third category, and the one that's perhaps most fondly remembered, emerged with the dawn of the Silver Age. This is the series that focus not just on a hero, but on a *situation*. Or perhaps a better term would be "formula." Or "gimmick."

Last time I discussed the early days of DC's flagship science-fiction title, *Strange Adventures*; let's now take a look at its companion. *Strange Adventures* began in 1950, and was a success. That meant the same thing to a publisher then that it does now—cash in on it! So early in 1951, DC put out a second SF title, *Mystery in Space*.

Why did they called it "Mystery"? Maybe they were hoping to get some attention from the horror craze that was just getting up to speed—a lot of horror titles incorporated the word "mystery" or "mysteries" somewhere. But then, various comics had used the word all along on unrelated titles that had little or no actual mystery element.

Whatever the reason, DC must have liked the word just then, because in the course of the following year they added *House of Mystery* and *Sensation Mystery*. The first eight issues of *Mystery in Space* reportedly featured "Knights of the Galaxy." The next dozen had no ongoing features. From #20 through #25, though, was the first gimmick series. The gimmick was a simple one: "Inter-planetary Insurance." The stories followed an insurance investigator of the future.

With #26 it was replaced by "Spece Cabbie"—which, like Interplanetary Insurance, is just what the name says, a cab driver in the far future. Everything worth knowing about these two features is right there in the names. And really, that's about it until we get to the Silver Age.

However you care to determine the exact beginning of theSilver Age and the comic book resurgence of the 1960s, at DC one of the keys

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to it all was unquestionably *Showcase*. That was the title where the Silver Age Flash premiered, where the Challengers of the Unknown made their bow, where Lois Lane first got an entire issue of her own.

And right after they moved Flash, and the Hitchhiker proceeds to have various adventures on Rann until the zeta radiation wears off, whereupon he's teleported back to Earth. He knows, though, about a whole series of zeta-beam flashes that Rann sent to Earth, so all he has to do is meet the next one and he'll zap back to Rann, where he can see Alanna again. And so he does, for years.

And that provided a framework and formula for all the Adam Strange stories. With very rare exceptions, the stories begin on Earth, with Adam traveling to some exotic location in order to intercept an incoming zeta beam, he finds himself on Rann, courts Alanna briefly, chums around with Sardath, saves Rann from an alien menace, and then is teleported back to Earth.

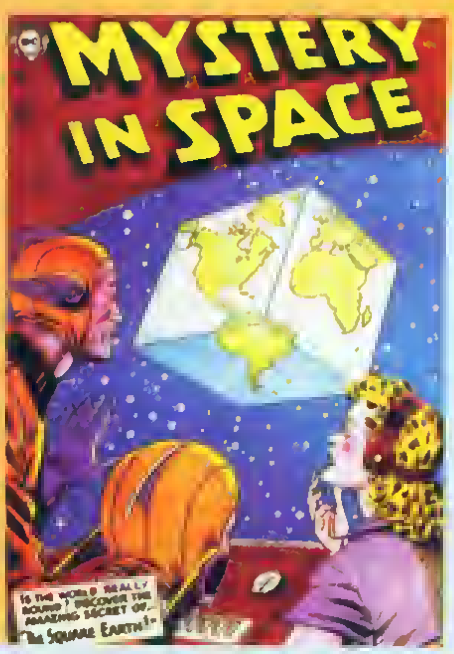
It's a simple formula, but it provided a basis for stories that beat anything else DC ever had in the science-fiction field. Adam had a *reason* for zapping off to another planet—to see his girl. The alien menaces were just an annoying interruption, from his point of view, in the *important* stuff, which was courting Alanna. This made him more human, more sympathetic, than all those guys with rayguns and spaceships. We got glimpses of everyday life on Rann, and since it's the same planet every time we actually got to know something about it, unlike all the worlds that were invented for a single appearance somewhere.

There was also the angle of constantly trying to figure out some way around the frustrating physics of the zeta-beam and his involuntary returns to Earth. And the fact that it was present-day Earth-One that was Adam Strange's home meant that crossovers were possible—the Justice League found out about his little jaunts, and got involved. Hawkman, a space traveler himself, visited Rann.

An unusual feature of the series was that it ended, and ended happily—eventually Adam got to Rann by a method other than zeta-beam, and was able to marry Alanna and settle down.

Adam Strange was probably DC's best and most successful science-fiction series, but he didn't last forever; toward the end he shared Mystery in Space with Hawkmen, then Space Ranger, and he was eventually replaced by Ultra the Multi-Alien, a superhero of whom the less said, the better.

And while Adam was zapping back and forth by zeta-beam in Mystery in Space@, what was happening in *Strange Adventures*? Well, in the May 1959 issue, #104, a regular feature was introduced—but it was a back-up, with no continuing hero. This was the "Space Museum." The premise was simple—in the 21st century, young Tommy Parker visits the Space Museum with his father, who tells him a story about some object on display there.



The difference between these and the ordinary one-shot stories isn't much, but the framework of Tommy finding the object in tha Museum added a certain charm. They appeared off and on up through #161.

With #114 another ongoing feature eppeered, lasting through #185, and again, it wasn't in avery issue. This was "Star Hawkins"—end again, this was a back-up teatura, not a lead. The covers still went to one-shot stories.

Star Hawkins, it seems, is a private detective in the 21st century; his greatest asset is his robot secretary, Ilda, which ha pawns whenever funds run low. The stories are often told from Ilda's point of view, which adds an interesting angle, and daspite her nominally subhuman role it's often she who actually solves the case.

It's the relationship between Hawkins and Ilda that makes this series so enjoyable—Ilda hero-worships her boss, even while being inturiated at his sloppy, happy-go-lucky nature, he, on the other hand, never seems to realize just how human his robot's personality and emotions are, even when she has crushes on pop sters or otherwise acts like a ditz. They argue often, but they know they need each other, and elways maka up by the end of the story. There's a certain wonky charm to the future technology in these stories. Things break down regularly; robots have personality traits thay aren't supposed to, machines go wrong in bizarre and clever ways.

Just three issues after Star Hawkins made his debut, yet another intermittant back-up series appeared, lasting through #160: "The Atomic Knights." Here wes e far more downbeat concapt than any other DC series of the time. It's 1991, five years after World War III has reduced much of the Earth to radioactive wastelend, and in the little community of Durvala the survivors are trying to return to normalcy—but mutent monstars, raiders, would-be dictators, and the like are making it difficult.

One citizen of Durvale, Gardner Grayle, has unaarthed six suits of medieval armor that heve been mysteriously strengthened by radiation, and now provide the wearers with protection against the dangers of the post-war world. He's recruited tive others into e band of "Atomic Knights" to detend Durvale and halp get civillzation back on its feet. There's Bryndon, the sciantist—gotta have a scientist to figure out what they're up against. Douglas Herald is Durvale's schoolteacher, Marlene Herald is his sister and provides the requisite dose of sex eppeal (naturally, she's in love with Grayle), and Wayne and Hollis Hobard, brothers and ex-soldiers, are the muscle of the bunch.

The Atomic Knights weren't played for laughs like Star Hawkins—on the contrary, they were utterly humorless—but they were just as bizarre. Six people in full armor riding giant mutant

Delmatians ecross radioactive wastes .. well, it was different, certainly The weird juxtapositions of tha familiar and the totally off-the-wall had a strong appeal. And again, there was a formula to these Durvale is making progress; some new menace appears to threaten the community; Grayle and company sult up end deal with the threat

And that leaves just one mora science-tiction series from the era of the 1950s and early '60s thet deserves mention the "Star Rovars." They usually eppeared as e back-up feature in *Mystery in Space*, but appearances in *Strange Adventures* were not unknown

There were three of them—Rick Purvis, Karel Sorensen, and Homer Glint. Eech of them wes an edventurer, your basic person with raygun and spaceship—and it's really rather amazing that Karel Sorensen was an equal member, never put down or belittled just because she was female. There had been some actual progress in the years since Kns KL-99

The formula here was that the three of them would all zoom off into space, competing to find the answer to some question or problem; each would have an adventure, and then the three would gather and compare notes. Sometimes they would each have pert of tha nacessery solution; sometimes they would have three solutions and need to determine which one was right, sometimes all three had equally good answers.

And trankly, it's hard to understand why readers liked them, the stories were virtually always contnved end silly, forced into the three-equel-parts formula. The Star Rovers themselves seemed childish, always compating with each other, always winding up reeffirming their friendship, only to go off playing at one-upmenship again in the next story.

And with that, we come to tha end of DC's great science-fiction era. By the time these features had come and gone comic books were so domineted by superheroes that most later SF series were just super-heroes in the future, or with some super-science angle—or else they tailed completely. DC's science-tiction senes may look neive now. But in their heyday, in the early 1960s, they were something spacial

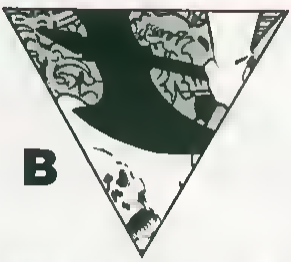
Lawrence Watt-Evans is the author of various

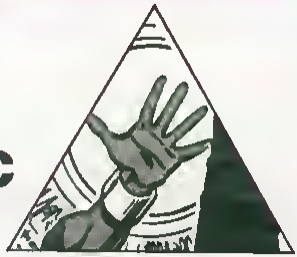
COVER SHOTS

HOW WELL DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR COVERS?

Below, you will find six pieces from covers published over the last year. Can you tell what covers they are from?

Answers on Page 134





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W K W A H A J N O S D E R O A
C A G E C E R E B U S T H M N
A F R E A K B R O T H E R S O
T I B M A G B E W L I M I P W
M I C R O C H I P A V O N A A
E E L G H O S T R I D E R W R
Z A K O L H T A E D R R O N D

AIM
Aliens
Archangel
Blackbird
Cage
Captain
America
Cerebus
Deathlok
Dove
Electra
Elektra
Freak Brothers
Gambit
Ghast Rider
Hawk
Lee
Lim
Laba
Lackheed
Micrachip
Nava
Rai
Red Sanja
Riddler
Ran
Shadawcat
Venam Spawn
X-O Monowar

WORD JUMBLE

Da yau knaw yaur stuff? I mean really knaw yaur stuff? The belaw jumbles, when praperly scrombled, farm camic reloted words. Example: RODDOM D R D O O M

1) FATCATMIRS
-- ---------

2) TANDINGLLHIG
--------- ---

3) RAPPITTMEER
---- -------

4) HAMSAN
------

5) SOLEYNMIMJ
----- -----

6) HIPOATERYSCP
------ ------

7) OBODR
-----

8) MUTTRRA
---- ---

9) SLAFH
-----

10) CLEENBUN
----- ---

11) GINBERRHA
----

12) LAPTANRRHS
----- -----

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

How well do you fare?

Answers on page 134

#Correct	Rank
0-6	GEEK
7-12	ROOKIE
13-18	MASTER
19-24	GURU
25-29	WIZARD
30	HERALD OF GALACTUS

1. Which of the following two heralds of Galactus fly around in space with no clothes on?
A) Airwalker & Gabriel
B) Terrax & Firelord
C) Silver Surfer & Nova
D) She-Hulk & Mary Jane (just dreaming)

2. The reason Batman wears a bright yellow insignia on his otherwise dark uniform is:
A) It's a mystical talisman which grants him supernatural luck.
B) It's bulletproof, and the bright color is to attract gunfire away from his unprotected body.
C) It's a two-way radio which he uses to keep in touch with Commissioner Gordon.
D) It's where he keeps his lunch money.

3. Which of the following characters has never encountered Galactus?
A) Ram
B) Shadowcat
C) Dazzler
D) Forge

4. What is the year that the comic "2112" takes place in?
A) what?
B) 2112
C) 1992
D) 2093

5 Aric is the real name of what Valiant superstar?
A) X-O Manowar
B) Harbinger
C) Solar
D) Jim Shooter

6. Max Dillon is the villain known as
A) Mr. Freeze
B) Meteor Man
C) say, isn't this the guy from Beverly Hills 90210?
D) Electra

7. The official Green Lantern of Earth is
A) Hal Jordan
B) John Stewart
C) Guy Gardner
D) G'nort

8. Autobot leader Optimus Prime's real name is ...
A) Dirilda Moor
B) Garian Kar
C) Orian Pax
D) Dintey Moore

9. Gareb Shamus is
A) a carnival performer who bites the heads off chickens.
B) an overworked insomniac
C) publisher of Wizard: The Guide to Comics
D) both B & C

10. In Web of Spider-Man #1, Spidey defeated the Venom costume with the help of:
A) a bell tower
B) a sonic shock blaster
C) the Human Torch
D) Eddie Brock

11. The Infinity Watch ...
A) tells time
B) guards the Infinity Gems
C) takes a lickin' and, well, you know...
D) has a picture of Mickey Mouse on it

12. The reason Spider-Man failed to stop the burglar who ran past him and later killed his uncle was
A) he was still young and inexperienced, and was

afraid to try
B) he was on his way ta drive Aunt May to the hospital
C) it was all-you-can-eat night at Arby's
D) he felt "it wasn't his job"

13. Loba works for
A) Justice League international
B) L E G.i.O N
C) The C O R P S.
D) Legion of Super-Heroes

14. Zen is..
A) Nez spelled backwards
B) an intergalactic ninja
C) blue
D) all of the above

15. Who played the Riddler on the Batman TV show?
A) Frank Gorshin
B) Burt Ward
C) Berges Meredith
D) Ceasar Romero

16. Which character never had a poseable action figure or doll made of him?
A) Mr Miracle
B) Batgirl
C) Hawkeye
D) Iceman

17. What is the name of Richie Rich's butler?
A) Jarvis
B) Cadbury
C) Pennyworth
D) Lexington

18. Professor X and the Juggernaut are
A) brothers
B) old rivals from a special forces unit
C) step brothers
D) bald

19. Ted Sallis was the name of the scientist wha was transformed inta
A) Swamp Thing
B) Morbius the living vampire
C) the arigina! Deathlok
D) Man Thing

20. Deathstroke the Terminator lost his eye when
A) he was hit by shrapnel in Vietnam
B) his wife shot him in the head
C) his son, the Ravager, stabbed him there in battle
D) he ran in the house with scissors

21. Loba has never appeared in which af the following?
A) Firestorm
B) Deman
C) Omega Men
D) Legion of Super-Heroes

22. Which of the following characters is not from the future?
A) Booster Gold
B) Bishop
C) X-O Manowar
D) Monarch

23. Silver Surfer hates Starfax because
A) he messed with Nava's mind
B) he ate all the Cracklin' Oat Bran
C) he messed with Mantis mind
D) both A & C

24. Lori Lemaris was
A) an old love of Superman
B) a mermaid
C) killed in Crisis on Infinite Earths
D) all of the above

25. Which of these twa peaple aren't married?
A) Vision and Scarlet Witch
B) Peter Parker and Mary Jane
C) Aurora and Northstar
D) Mr Miracle and Big Barda

26. Alpha Flight has never dane battle with ..
A) Hydra
B) the X-Men
C) Galactus
D) sentinels

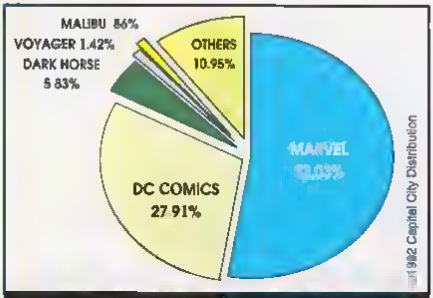
27. John Byrne's "Next Men" made their debut in:
A) Giant-Size Next Men #1
B) Dark Horse Presents #54
C) Marvel Comics Presents #12
D) DC Comics Presents #51

28. The Vision's father-in-law is:
A) Magneto
B) dead
C) the original Human Torch
D) Simon Williams

29. Iron Man of 2020 has never faught...
A) Machine Man
B) Death's Head
C) Dr Doom
D) Spider-Man

30. At the end of Inferno, Magik (Ilyana Rasputin) was
A) killed
B) turned into a baby
C) turned into an old woman
D) banished to limbo

WIZARD MARKET WATCH



November 1991 piece share of the comic book market, according to Capital City Distribution.

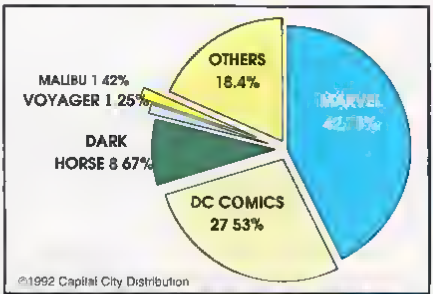
* To say "*X-Men* is hot" is redundent. *X-Men* and its sister book, *Uncanny X-Men*, continue to rule comicdom. Whether it be Jim Lee's work on either title, or Whilce Portacio's on *Uncanny*, it all equals up to big $. How long can the X-Dynasty last?

* Speaking of mutants...the other X-Books in Marvel's arsenal also are doing quite well. Rob Liefeld's *X-Force* is continually selling off the shelves, and the current "New Brotherhood" storyline is working out quite nicely. *Excalibur* is also receiving a breath of fresh air thanks to Alan Davis' talented pen. The team of Larry Stroman and Peter David have also rekindled *X-Factor's* waning flame. All in all, Marvels X-Titles are completely dominating the industry.

* Other hot tidbits on the "sizzle-o-meter" include the "Final Days" series which ran through *Punisher #53-59*. The release of *Punisher: War Zone* seems to have sparked some new reader interest to this title. Other titles which are experiencing high reader interest include *Darkhawk, New Warriors, Sleep Walker* and *Ghost Rider*.

* The "Fall of the Kingpin" storyline in the pages of *Daredevil* caused excitement throughout the comic world, only to fall on its face with a botched issue #300. Instead of having a foil embossed and spot varnish cover, it was a standard comic. It was, however, an excellent story with excellent art, so back issue prices are rising regardless.

* Ah...now to the world of DC Comics. It would appear that every book of theirs is at a standstill, except the *New Titans*. The "Titan Hunt" storyline jumpstarted the series once again, and the future looks very promising indeed for this hot title.



November 1991 dollar share of the comic book market, according to Capital City Distribution.

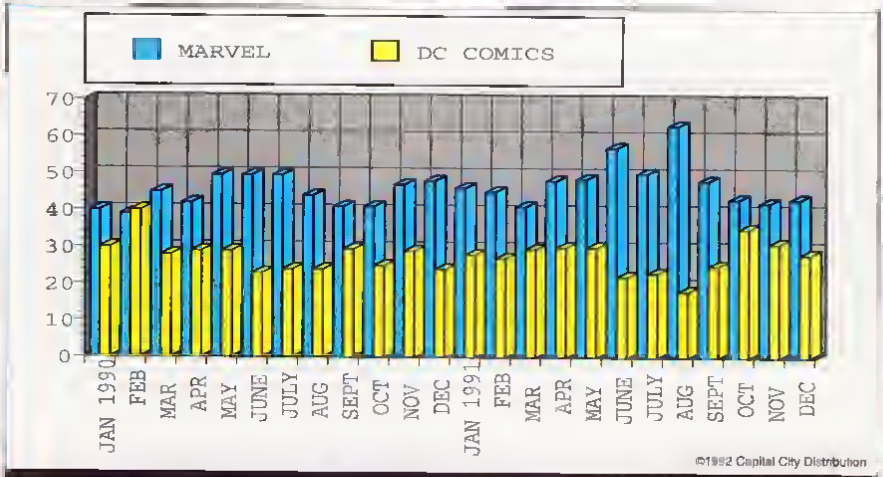
* As for the independent market, most companies are standing still or losing ground, with the exception of Dark Horse and Valiant. Keep an eye on some of their hot new titles like *Next Men* and *X-O Manowar*.

* On the downside of the comics scale, Todd McFarlane's earlier work on *Incredible Hulk* and *Amazing Spider-Man* continue their downward spiral. If rumors are true, and Todd returns next year on the Venom mini series, expect things to turn around.

* *Punisher War Journal* fails to keep up to its flagship title as its first few issues slip a little in the guide. What makes this so odd is the fact that these were done by Jim "X-Man" Lee. This might have something to do with the new Punisher trade paperback that reprints those costly first issues.

* An interesting phenomenon occurs this month as Marvel raises most of their cover prices $.25, eliminating the Marvel $1 book. Almost all back issues priced at $1 have increased by (you guessed it) $.25. Kind of makes sense that a back issue book should be worth at least as much as a new issue, yes?

* A lot of new products are on the horizon for 1992. A second Ghost Rider series, *Spirits of Vengeance*, will be a monthly book starring Johnny Blaze and the Ghost Rider. Also on the way are *Morbius: The Living Vampire*, *Night Stalkers* (starring Hannibal King, Frank Drake and Blade as mystic bounty hunters) and the 2093 series, which takes place in Marvel's future, introducing us to future versions of Spider-Man, Punisher, Dr. Doom and lots more. If nothing else, 1992 will certainly prove to be an interesting year.



Percentage share of market from January 1990 to December 1991

ANSWERS PAGE

C.B.I.Q.

1)C 2)B 3)D 4)B 5)A 6)D 7)C 8)C 9)D 10)A 11)B 12)D 13)B 14)C 15)A 16)C 17)B 18)C 19)D 20)B 21)A 22)C 23)A 24)D 25)C 26)A 27)B 28)A 29)C 30)B.

from pages 60 & 61

WORD JUMBLE

answers:
1) Mr Fantastic
2) Lightning Lad
3) Time Trapper
4) Shaman
5) Jimmy Olsen
6) Psycha Pirate
7) Brood
8) Rama Tut
9) Flash
10) Uncle Ben
11) Harbinger
12) Ralph Snart

NEW MUTANTS CONTENTS

ANSWERS FROM ISSUE #3

1) ABIN SUR
2) SHE HULK
3) RAY PALMER
4) THANOS
5) ELONGATED MAN
6) QUICKSILVER

CODE: PEACHES

COVER SHOTS

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

WORD SEARCH

WIZARD

WHAT THE HEY...?!?

COMING AT YOU WITH BOTH BARRELS BLAZING AS WE HIT THE NEWSSTAND IN FULL FORCE!

- WIZARD SPEAKS TO: BARRY WINDSOR SMITH
- FREE POSTER
- ANDY MANGELS HOLLYWOOD HEROES
- BREAKING INTO THE COMICS BUSINESS

WIZARD
KISTH
91
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